NOTA
VOC FOR IOP/FN
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U.S. JOBS REACH RECORD EIGHTY-SEVEN MILLION

ANNCR:

THE U.S. LABOR DEPARTMENT REPORTS (FRIDAY) THAT THE NUMBER OF AMERICANS GAINFULLY EMPLOYED HAS RISEN TO A NEW HIGH. AND THE UNEMPLOYMENT RATE IN APRIL REMAINED THE SAME AS IT WAS IN MARCH. VOA BUSINESS EDITOR FRANK FEINBERG LOOKS AT THE OVERALL JOB SITUATION:

VOICE:

THE NUMBER OF AMERICANS HOLDING JOBS ROSE LAST MONTH BY SEVEN-HUNDRED-TEN THOUSAND -- REACHING A RECORD OF MORE THAN EIGHTY-SEVEN MILLION PERSONS (87.4). IN THE MEANTIME, THE UNEMPLOYMENT RATE STAYED AT SEVEN POINT FIVE PER CENT OF THE LABOR FORCE. THE REASON FOR THIS WAS THAT THE RISE IN EMPLOYMENT WAS BALANCED OFF BY A SIMILAR INCREASE IN THE NUMBER OF PERSONS AVAILABLE FOR WORK.

SEVERAL CONCLUSIONS CAN BE DRAWN FROM THE SPATE OF STATISTICS. FIRST, THE NUMBER OF AMERICANS HOLDING JOBS HAS RISEN NOW FOR MORE THAN ONE-YEAR. ABOUT NINETY-THREE PER CENT OF THE NATION'S AVAILABLE WORK FORCE IS EMPLOYED. THIS IS A HIGHER PROPORTION IN RELATION TO POPULATION THAN ANY OTHER INDUSTRIALIZED NATION.

THE APRIL FIGURES SHOW THAT THE UNEMPLOYMENT RATE FOR ADULT MEN DECLINED SLIGHTLY, WHILE JOBLESSNESS AMONG TEENAGERS INCREASED SLIGHTLY. THE UNEMPLOYMENT RATE FOR ADULT WOMEN REMAINED UNCHANGED. THESE STATISTICS GIVE AN INSIGHT INTO THE COMPOSITION OF THE AMERICAN LABOR FORCE, AND ITS IMPACT ON THE OVERALL JOB PICTURE.

THE INCREASE IN JOBS FOR MARRIED MEN IS SIGNIFICANT SINCE THE MAJORITY OF THEM, AS HOUSEHOLD HEADS, ARE THE PRIME SOURCE OF INCOME. THE UNEMPLOYMENT RATES FOR WOMEN AND TEENAGERS IS HIGHER THAN THAT FOR ADULT MEN, BUT IT MUST BE REMEMBERED THAT A GREAT NUMBER OF WOMEN AND TEENAGERS HAVE BEEN MOVING INTO JOBS IN RECENT YEARS. THE EMPLOYMENT GAIN OF WOMEN AND TEENAGERS -- COMBINED -- ACTUALLY HAS COME CLOSE TO DOUBLING THE JOB GAIN ATTAINED BY ADULT MEN IN THE PAST YEAR. AMERICA'S LABOR FORCE HAS BEEN SWELLED BY MILLIONS OF WOMEN, WHO HAVE MOVED OUTSIDE THEIR DOMESTIC CHORES TO SEEK JOBS. THIS MEANS MORE BUYING POWER IN HOUSEHOLDS WHERE BOTH MAN-AND-WIFE ARE EMPLOYED.

LABOR DEPARTMENT OFFICIALS REGARD THE BIGGEST CHALLENGE AHEAD AS INCREASING JOB OPPORTUNITIES FOR TEENAGERS, PARTICULARLY AMONG MINORITIES IN URBAN AREAS. INDUSTRY'S INCREASING EMPHASIS ON SPECIFIC SKILLS MEANS MORE EDUCATION AND TRAINING WILL BE NEEDED FOR MORE JOBS.

DESPITE THE IMPRESSIVE INCREASE IN JOBS, THE NUMBER OF AMERICANS LOOKING FOR JOBS REMAINS HIGH. SPECTACULAR EMPLOYMENT GAINS ARE NOT LIKELY TO OCCUR. BUT IT IS NOTEWORTHY THAT IN THE PAST THIRTEEN MONTHS -- THROUGH APRIL -- ABOUT THREE-MILLION PERSONS WERE ADDED TO THE EMPLOYMENT ROLLS.

JS/RCS